

## Minutes of Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) meeting

29 January 2016

### Present:

Tracey Rawlings Church – TRC

Jonathan Rigal – JR

John Booth – JB

Cllr Paul Gittings – PG

Ben Burfoot - BB

Chris Beales - CB

Apologies

Dan Fernbank – DF

Chris Rhodes – CR

Cllr Tony Page - TP

### 1 – Matters Arising.

Colour of streetlights. JB asked for a meeting to be set up with a relevant RBC officer and a consultant who is working on street light colour. BB to enquire about a meeting via Councillor Page.

Divestment. A paper went to policy committee recommending divestment from fossil fuels for RBC and Berkshire Pension Fund. RBC policy is now not to invest in fossil fuels and pressure is being put on Berkshire Pension fund to do the same, but maximisation of value clause conflicts with ethical clause which is less well-defined.

2 – Update on BB's job. Came up for removal of post under budget cuts. Feedback considered, Ben is staying but will be reducing his hours and there are other changes to the team.

3 – Nomination for chair. This involves representation on the LSP Board in the Environment seat – or could be a different representative with a change to terms of reference. BB nominated Dan Fernbank, TRC seconded. Agreed in his absence subject to agreement from the University and DF. DF has proposed a 2 year rotating chair, this was agreed and the terms of reference will be amended by BB to reflect that.

4 – Constitution. We are unconstituted, as is the LSP (Local Strategic Partnership). This means the decision making rests with the members, not the body itself. This promotes mutual commitment. RCCP is a sub-partnership of the LSP. This begs the question whether it would be sensible to constitute the partnership in its own right, the LSPs are becoming weaker generally; Reading's has no funding and our topic isn't in their 3 key priorities currently. RCCP has a strategy, action plan, revenue stream and budget surplus and has momentum. Becoming constituted makes the board legally responsible for its actions, and the board would manage the budget instead of the council. CB asked whether the people or the organisations they represent would be legally responsible, but those present who represent organisations felt that their companies could not take on this liability. Agreed to continue in current guise for the present.

5 – Funding/Budget. Public bodies are not supposed to roll budgets forward, so we are under pressure to either spend our surplus or find another body to hold it – hence the constitution question. BB is reducing his hours to 4 days and DCLG has approved a technical assistance fund to enable him to work up a pipeline for projects for the Climate Berkshire partnership. His time will be

equally split between the two, representation of RBC on RCCP will continue to be in his remit; in addition some of the work for RCCP may be eligible for match-funding for the DCLG-funded workstream. Some project work could also be taken on by BB on a funded basis. Admin, events and web support is a separate issue and the person involved would work to the chair. There was debate around whether this should be a RBC person or not. RCCP can't employ them as it's not a legal entity, and the strong consensus was that an RBC employee would be preferable, funded from RCCP revenue.

6 – Grants. Green Health Reading – we have funded several food projects, and this body has already had £10k from the LSP. There is considerable funding being spent in this area currently from other sources and it's more a social than a climate change initiative. Condition to be placed on the grant that they educate service users about climate change and prepare a paper for RCAN website on what was done, how it can be done by others and what was the climate change benefit. GREN request was accepted with a similar proviso about the report for RCAN. More focus should be placed on capturing and disseminating the learning about climate change on the application form.

7 – Local Plan. Issues and options consultations proposal for the local plan provision. Climate change mitigation and adaptation are the two leading environmental issues in the framework and the outcomes are mostly negative. CB's view is that Reading needs an adaptation plan and any new build increases the climate change risk. John feels the increase in local population is also detrimental. A sub-group to be convened for a meeting with the relevant planner to understand the plan in detail. JB, CB and JR all expressed interest. BB to contact planners and JB to convene the sub-group.

8 – Use of £50k capital surplus from the first solar install. RISC will fund the installs using a loan from RCCP which will be repaid from FITs. Sites have been pre-registered but we won't know until March if this has been successful. RCCP will also pay RISC's legal fees.

9 – Reading Community Energy Society. DF is on the board (in a personal capacity), and the Council has board members too, but the RCCP role is not directly involved. Summreen has asked for RCCP to have some profile but RCES are not required to report to us. It was proposed that RCCP buy a share in order to access information. Reading Hydro applied for a licence and planning permission but have missed the opportunity to apply for the previous level of feed-in tariff. This changes their financial model so they are seeking partnership with Ecotricity or Triodos. They need a customer for the energy – EA could be potential customer. They may need some legal costs covered but no current grant request in hand. CB mentioned that the flow of the Thames is not massive and we should assess the performance of other schemes like Osney when making any decisions on the Caversham scheme. Also the 49 weirs on the Thames need to be maintained periodically so civil engineering costs could be shared if schemes are synchronised. It also needs flood defence consent. BB wondered if RCCP could broker a conversation with the Environment Agency about the island on Caversham Lock for a sustainability centre. CB is unsure of its suitability but will facilitate an introduction if that's what the Centre for Sustainability wants.

12 no AOB

13 DONM - tba